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IMPERATIVES IN THE TEACHING OF PORTUGUESE.

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THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WISHING TO STUDY PORTUGUESE, WHETHER AT THE HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE LEVEL, ARE OFTEN MOTIVATED BY FACTORS EXTERNAL TO TRADITIONAL INTEREST IN THE MORE COMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES. THE PROSPECTIVE STUDENT OF PORTUGUESE HAS OFTEN SUCCESSFULLY STUDIED FRENCH OR SPANISH AND PERHAPS HAS EVEN HAD FLES TRAINING IN A THIRD LANGUAGE. SUCH A STUDENT SHOULD BE OFFERED COURSES IN PORTUGUESE DESIGNED FOR SPEAKERS OF ANOTHER ROMANCE LANGUAGE (ESPECIALLY SPANISH). WHEN FEASIBLE, BOTH A REGULAR ELEMENTARY AND AN ACCELERATED COURSE SHOULD BE OFFERED. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, A SCHOOL WITH A LANGUAGE LABORATORY OR AUDIOLINGUAL EQUIPMENT COULD OFFER A PROGRAMED COURSE IN SPOKEN PORTUGUESE FOR SPEAKERS OF SPANISH WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF AN INSTRUCTOR (SEE ED 010 319). IN ENCOURAGING ABLE STUDENTS TO STUDY PORTUGUESE, CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO MAKE USE OF THE BEST AVAILABLE TEACHING MATERIALS AND TO PLAN FOR COURSES BEYOND THE TWO-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL SEQUENCE OR INITIAL ONE-YEAR COLLEGE COURSE. ADVANCED COURSES IN LITERATURE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO PRESENT THE FULL RANGE OF PORTUGUESE CULTURE. COURSES IN LUSO BRAZILIAN CULTURE AND AREA STUDIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND TAUGHT IN PORTUGUESE. THESE COURSES NEED NOT BE SUBORDINATED TO A LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES CURRICULUM, HOWEVER. AGAIN, INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS COULD BE DEVELOPED USING PROGRAMED MATERIALS, CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION OR VIDEOTAPED CLASSES, OR COORDINATED HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. BASIC TO THESE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM IS THE NEED FOR MORE AND BETTER TRAINED TEACHERS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 27-29, 1967. (JD)

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IMPERATIVES IN THE TEACHING OF PORTUGUESE

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Any examination of the imperatives in Portuguese curriculum content, as in any academic area, must begin with a clear understanding of the objectives we hope to reach in our instructional program. These objectives, in turn, must be based upon a recognition of the primary factors which motivate students to seek training in the area of our concern. This procedure is as necessary in our consideration of the Portuguese curriculum in the high school as it is at the college level.

As has been amply demonstrated[1], despite the fact that Portuguese language and area studies have been offered in American educational institutions since the nineteenth century, their existence has been sporadic, ebbing and flowing both with the course of world events which gave occasional prominence to Brazil and other Portuguese-speaking areas of the globe and with the presence of communities of Portuguese-speaking immigrants in the United States which sought to preserve their cultural heritage through educating their children in the Portuguese language.

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[1] Fred P. Ellison, The Teaching of Portuguese in the United States, a paper presented to the VI Colóquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros, Harvard University, 1966, and Fred P. Ellison, "Portuguese in the First Fifty Years of the AATSP," Hispania L (1967) 860-871.

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Today's interest in Portuguese is clearly a phenomenon of the twentieth century. Whether we attribute it to the impact of U.S.-Brazilian relations during World War II, to the appearance of Portuguese on the government's "critical languages" list, to the prominence given Brazil in the Peace Corps program, to the emergence of Brazil as a dominant nation in Latin American affairs, or to the stimulus of federal support for the initiation of Portuguese studies programs at the various educational levels, the fact remains that there exists in the United States no consistent social demand for the language based on the conviction that it is both valuable and useful in our educational system[2].

This realization, coupled with the current comparative enrollment figures in foreign languages, places Portuguese from the outset in a far different position than its "bulk language" counterparts: French, German, and Spanish. The demand for these languages has, after all, grown out of a 200-year national awareness and appreciation of the cultural, political, and economic importance of the countries in which they are spoken. The demand for Portuguese, however, continues to depend upon the external factors I have listed, as well as on the existence of a general national "mood" begetting an increased motivation to study foreign languages and cultures in general and upon the increasing number of students who, reflecting their earlier start in language study through FLES, desire to study a second, or even third, foreign language.

Of course, the starting-point for the study of any people, their life, ideas, history, and destiny, is the mastery of their spoken language. I need not recount

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[2] Ibid.

here the long period in the development of today's philosophy of foreign language teaching. It must suffice to assert again that the only satisfactory vehicle for the initial language-learning experience in Portuguese is the one in which all four language skills-listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing--are presented in that order, then intensively and extensively drilled, and set forth in an inductive learning experience. Until recently, we may have been justified in attributing some of our growth problems to the lack of published instructional programs (texts and tapes) of this description. Now with the appearance of such materials[3], their rapid introduction into Portuguese programs is urgent. The student with no prior foreign language experience can now be expected to build the kind of four-skill language proficiency in Portuguese as he has in the "bulk language" areas. With slight modifications, moreover, usually in the matter of evolving a horizontal treatment of each unit, these texts should prove as successful at the high school level as they have been at the college level.

But what can we offer the increasing number of students who have already studied another foreign language? Often he has already worked with French or Spanish. He tends to be a more highly motivated student, having profitted from the discipline of earlier successful language study, but many times hesitates in undertaking further foreign language study because he wishes not to follow what is for him a tedious procedure of beginning again in courses without regard for his greater language-learning sophistication. Yet here we have an unexploited

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[3]Among others, we may mention: H. Hoge and P. Lunardini, Oral Brazilian Portuguese, University of Wisconsin: Milwaukee, 1964; Fred P. Ellison, et al., Modern Portuguese, Austin, 1965; Claude E. Leroy, Português para principiantes, Madison: University of Wisconsin Extension Division, 1964; and Maria Isabel Abreu and Cléah Rameh, Português contemporâneo, Washington: Georgetown University, 1966.

advantage: courses in Portuguese especially designed for students with proficiency in another Romance language, especially Spanish. There can, of course, be no sacrifice of methodology. The same full four-skill presentation, drill, and inductive generalization of grammar characteristic of the best audio-lingual instruction must be present here. The economies are effected by the frequent points of similarity between the morphology and syntax of Spanish and Portuguese where analogy and educated intuition or "feel" can take the place of lengthy presentations. At the phonological level, quite naturally, there are fewer points of similarity[4].

Somewhat similar economies may be achieved in courses based on the student's prior proficiency in French, but Spanish is, after all, closer to Portuguese in terms of historical development and a language which many have studied in programs commencing as early as the fourth grade.

This does not mean, however, that the same materials we use for the regular fundamental course will produce superior results with students who have attained prior proficiency in Spanish. Optimum results in this latter situation require materials especially designed for it.

Ideally, both the regular fundamental course and the accelerated one based on Spanish should be offered. Most high schools and colleges, however, opt for only one of the two possibilities[5]. Staffing and scheduling difficulties are

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[4] David M. Feldman, "A Comparison of the Segmental Phonemes of Brazilian Portuguese and American Spanish," Linguistics XXIX (1967) 44-57.

[5] David M. Feldman, "Some Statistics on Portuguese Studies in the U.S.," Hispania XLVI (1963) 787-791; Gilbert Cavaco, The Teaching of Portuguese in the Colleges and Universities of the U.S., Fall River, Mass.: Durfee H.S., mimeographed, 1966.

the major impediments. Yet here again, recent developments suggest a possible solution. Because of the higher motivation and greater language-learning sophistication of the student already proficient in another foreign language, he would seem to possess the psychological characteristics required for successful performance in programmed learning. An experimental programmed course in spoken Portuguese for those with proficiency in Spanish already exists, based on the same audio-lingual principles outlined above, but designed for use without the continued presence of an instructor[6]. Its use, or the use of materials like it which will undoubtedly develop in the future, constitutes one possible solution to the problem. Thus, in essence, any school equipped with an audio-active-compare language laboratory or two-track tape recorder stations in the library can, without increasing staff or facilities, offer both types of fundamental language course. School districts may wish also to investigate possibilities for assistance under NDEA in the introduction of Portuguese into their curricula.

Once the basic language courses are instituted, the choice of text must be made. What may suffice as a beginning text in the "bulk" languages may not serve our needs. We cannot afford the rate of attrition of disinterested or insufficiently challenged students common in the "bulk" languages. We must seek only audio-lingual texts of the best design, provided with a co-ordinated laboratory tape program, and linguistically authentic in every respect, including choice of dialect[7]. But just

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[6]David M. Feldman, A Programmed Self-Instructional Audio-Lingual Course in Brazilian Portuguese for Speakers of Spanish, Washington, USOE, 1966.

[7]For a further discussion of the dialect problem, see Francis Rogers, "Proposed Specifications for a 'Português moderno' Textbook," Hispania XLVII (1964) 823-826, and Fred Ellison, Summary of the Minutes of Portuguese Language Development Conference, University of Texas, May, 1964.

as important is the feature of carefully structured cultural focuses from the very first lesson on. We know, of course, that in the best audio-lingual materials in any language the language itself is presented as an intimate manifestation of culture through an awareness that language is at once the means of communication of its speakers and the very fabric of which their thoughts are formed. Thus, in equal degrees, the linguistic elements of culture are taught as a part of language learning and non-linguistic aspects of culture are used as vehicles for language learning.

Another point at which the imperatives for Portuguese programs differ from those of the "bulk" languages is in the matter of course sequences. Given the higher average of motivation of the Portuguese student, we can expect a faster pace of learning and higher level of achievement in the initial college course or first two years of the high school course. We need to encourage the student upon completing these courses to continue the study of the language in its cultural contexts, rather than to continue in additional courses devoted exclusively to the language. Yet we must not confuse this cultural context with courses in literature. Literature is, after all, but one of the cultural resources of any people and, at least in the type of program I am discussing here, should be kept within a proportion relative to the entire panorama of the Portuguese-speaking civilization. The ideal follow-up course, then, should focus on a broad consideration of the Portuguese-speaking world. In so doing, however, we must guard against subordinating the Luso-Brazilian sequence to all-inclusive curricula in Latin American studies, as it often, unfortunately, happens. While it is indisputably true that Brazil's colonial and independent history is intimately linked to the whole picture of the Peninsular colonization in the western hemisphere, unless

the Luso-Brazilian curriculum is independent of the Latin American studies program, we risk a de-emphasis of Portugal's rôle in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Far East. The balance between the study of the Portuguese-speaking world as an independent one and the study of Brazil as a part of Latin America must scrupulously be maintained.

Courses in the Portuguese curriculum must be taught in Portuguese with constant attention paid to the use and improvement of the language in understanding lectures and readings, taking notes, participating in class discussions, writing term and seminar papers, etc.

We maintain that a two-year intensive audio-lingual course in Portuguese at the high school level should be followed by courses in Luso-Brazilian civilization, but we are likewise aware of the problems of staffing and scheduling these courses. In so planning, we must be alert once again to the potential of programmed learning. The preparation of programmed materials for this purpose might well be the subject of an experimental project with assistance from the appropriate funding agencies. Another possibility in this area is closed-circuit television. For example, a high-school advanced course in Luso-Brazilian civilization would view the college course in the same material three days per week. Readings would be accomplished as homework and discussions under the leadership of the high-school teacher would take place on the other two days each week, as would also the testing program. Naturally, adjustments in lesson plans could be made to correspond to the needs of the particular schools.[8] Whether by means of videotape or direct broadcast, such a program is becoming more and more possible as the installation of closed-circuit and videotape equipment becomes standard in high schools and colleges. Of course,

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[8] A project of this type is now being planned at California State College at Fullerton, under the direction of the author.

students completing the civilization course at the high school level would receive advanced placement credit upon college entrance——an additional stimulus to enrollments.

Basic to all of this is an intensive effort to expand the training facilities for prospective teachers of Portuguese. For those many Spanish teachers who have studied Portuguese, more summer and academic-year institutes are needed. Just as importantly, consistent follow-up programs should be established on an in-service basis. Unfortunately, at least until now, caution and hesitancy regarding such programs have been the rule at many of the funding sources. Certainly this is an area of concern in which the responsible voice of the profession should be heard more clearly.

Finally, the colleges and universities which do now or seek to offer programs for the training of teachers of Portuguese must realize that such programs have special requirements. It is not enough to put the prospective teacher through the same training program as the student seeking research or non-pedagogical career objectives. The future teacher will need intensive work in language, linguistics, stylistics, and the specific methodology of teaching Portuguese at the various academic levels, in addition to the regular academic offerings in the general Portuguese curriculum.

Thus the renaissance of Portuguese studies in this decade, which is a source of pride for us all and the very motive for this meeting, carries with it some inescapable imperatives. I have attempted to outline only some of the more urgent among them. Naturally, we would hope to see these suggestions complemented by structured programs in study abroad, field experience, and travel.